

escaped and were recaptured soon afterwards. As Harry Gordon explains, the 'full facts' of the escape were not disclosed until quite recently. The author of an earlier book on the incident published in 1978, he found in preparing a new work that there was much information of which he had not been previously aware.

Gordon is a distinguished journalist who is the author of nine previous books, most of which have been well received. It is, then, not surprising that *Voyage from Shame* is clearly written and well organised. I found it difficult to put down as the story it recounts is full of drama and human interest. The book is also based on thorough research. Much relevant archival material was used in its preparation and many of those involved with the escape, both Australian and Japanese, were interviewed. Gordon makes a sincere effort to understand the Japanese participants and hopes that his book will assist the process of reconciliation. My one complaint is that some dialogue, while based on evidence, has clearly been invented for dramatic effect.

A point that emerges frequently is the enormous shame associated with surrender for the Japanese. Many prisoners at Cowra had given false names when captured so that dishonour would not be brought to their families. The breakout was, from an Australian perspective, a futile business as there was virtually no chance that any escapee could elude recapture for very long. For the Japanese involved, though, the aim was to remove shame by being killed or committing suicide. Even today some survivors of the breakout find it difficult, if not impossible, to discuss or even acknowledge their prisoner of war experience.

Among the more prominent organisers were air force men captured in the Northern Territory. Hajime Toyoshima, for instance, made an emergency landing on Melville Island after the Japanese raid on Darwin on 19 February 1942. He was found by Matthias Ngapiatilawai, a young Tiwi man who became the first person to arrest a Japanese serviceman on Australian soil. Another group of five airmen, including Marekuni Takahara, were also washed ashore on Melville Island after being shot down at sea nearby.

That the escape took place at all was due to lax Australian procedures. Many members of the garrison battalion at the Cowra camp were unfit for normal military service and their weapons were obsolete. There were some early warnings that a breakout might take place but these were

not properly understood. Two middle-aged Australian soldiers died heroically in a vain attempt to stop the escapees with a single Lewis Gun. Even the efforts to recapture prisoners were sometimes badly organised. Some soldiers sent out to look for the Japanese were only armed with bayonets.

*Voyage from Shame* deserves a wide readership. It ought to appeal to all those interested in the Australian experience in the Second World War. It also is worth close attention at a time when many Australians are looking closely at developing understanding with various Asian peoples. Of these the Japanese are perhaps the most important yet remain the most perplexing.

DAVID CARMENT

**Denis Winter, *25 April 1915: the inevitable tragedy*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994, ISBN 0 7022 2472 3, xiv + 290 pp, \$18.95.**

Denis Winter is an historian with a special interest in the First World War whose recent book *Haig's Command: A Reassessment* attracted much criticism and led several reviewers to question his capacities as a researcher and writer. *25 April 1915* is slightly less controversial but some of its claims are still likely to be contested. The purpose of his latest work is to present a new picture of the landing at Gallipoli, an event with almost spiritual significance in Australia. Winter claims to have used documents never before studied by historians. He argues that these conclusively demonstrate that the campaign was doomed from the very beginning. This view is, of course, in opposition to the quite widely held belief that the Gallipoli operation may have succeeded if the men in charge at various levels had made wiser decisions during the campaign.

Winter considers various events leading up to 25 April through discussion of the soldiers involved, strategic planning and operational matters. He argues that there was 'a quantity of forethought and planning in stark contrast to the customary presentation of Gallipoli as a knee-jerk response to the Russian appeal for assistance of January 1915'. He provides an evocative description of the day to day experiences of the Australians and New Zealanders training at Mena in Egypt, not far from the great pyramids, and

later at the island of Lemnos. There is extensive use of their diaries and letters. As in Bill Gammage's classic *The Broken Years*, one gets the impression of young men who were dangerously naive. They often saw the war as a great adventure with little realisation of the horrors that would occur. Meanwhile, the politicians and senior commanders were, Winter contends, 'muddled' in their thinking about the Gallipoli venture and 'mercilessly pushed forward' with inherently faulty schemes.

The most interesting part of the book deals with the landing on 25 April. Winter suggests that the true story is difficult to recount due to the secrecy enforced by military commanders and the fact that so many vital documents are missing. He argues, though, that three distinct and consecutive schemes existed for the landing, each with a clear tactical logic behind it. The last of these, contrary to the usual version in studies of Gallipoli, indicated that Anzac Cove was the chosen landing point and the troops did not arrive there by mistake. Winter also contests prevailing views about the soldiers' conduct at Gallipoli. Some formations disintegrated under Turkish firepower, with men straggling back towards the beach. Other soldiers, of course, fought heroically. A special bond was formed among those who survived the fighting on the first day at Gallipoli.

Winter writes well and his book is easy to follow. There are some excellent photographs and maps. The book also appears to be thoroughly researched although there are occasional factual errors. I am not sure that he adds as greatly to the Gallipoli story as he claims or whether expert military historians will think much of some of his arguments. For the general reader interested in Australians' experience of war, though, *25 April 1915* is certain to be of interest.

DAVID CARMENT

Gail Reekie, ed. *On the edge: women's experiences of Queensland*. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994. ISBN 0702224618 RRP \$29.95.

The title of this edited collection of essays, *On the Edge*, relates not only to the marginalised position of women, but of all Queenslanders in relation to Victoria and New South Wales.

Queenslanders, it would seem, are searching for new identities through their histories and literature. Work began on this book in 1989 and it is reasonable to speculate that after a year of celebrating the bicentennial of the settlement of Sydney, which became synonymous with the settlement of all Australia, the collaborators were keen to ensure other voices were heard in the construction of our national identity.

The bibliographic survey concludes that women have been excluded so far from most general histories of Queensland and this text therefore can be read as a contribution to the search for a revised and feminised Queensland identity. The masculinist images of the frontier days no longer reflect the way Queenslanders view themselves. Several of the writers identify David Malouf, Jessica Anderson and Thea Astley as the most influential figures in reconstructing Queenslanders' fictional identities. Also significant, argue many of the writers, is the distinctive architecture of the Queenslander house and the way various spaces were created and used by the occupants, and by women in particular.

There are thirteen essays covering sources, histories, spaces, and politics and parties. The majority of the contributors, of whom all are women, were connected in some way with Griffith University at the time of publication and the camera-ready copy was produced with the assistance of the Division of Humanities at Griffith University, which makes this book a truly collaborative effort. The collection is presented as a contribution to women's studies rather than to women's history, though most of the essays use historical methodology and the book is published under the University of Queensland's Studies in Australian History series.

The Introduction by Gail Reekie, addresses the relevance of region to feminist enquiry. Region, argues Reekie, is defined by borders constructed for the use of geographers, demographers and politicians.

Because women were primarily located in the domestic and private sphere as daughters, wives and mothers and only temporarily or informally (if ever) as entrepreneurs or paid workers, the majority were isolated from the effects of such public and formal regional boundaries. Is region, then, a useful concept in the analysis of women's relationship to history, culture and government? (p.2.)

Reekie suggests that for regionalism to be relevant to feminist study, the borders must be